

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L RIYADH 449

EXDIS

FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PEPR, SA, XF
SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH CROWN PRINCE FAHD ON MIDDLE EAST
SITUATION

1. ON JUNE 10 I PAID MY FIRST CALL ON CROWN PRINCE FAHD SINCE
RETURNING FROM WASHINGTON. CROWN PRINCE WAS IN EXCELLENT SPIRITS
AND THE CONVERSATION WAS WIDE-RANGING. I AM SENDING SEPTELS COVER-
ING HIS REMARKS ON AFGHANISTAN, IRAN AND ISRAEL.

2. I TOOK OCCASION TO DESCRIBE SIGNIFICANCE OF AIRCRAFT PACKAGE
VOTE AND TO COMMEND CROWN PRINCE'S KEY ROLE IN PROCESS, PARTICULARLY
HIS EFFECTIVE MEETINGS WITH SENATORS AND CONGRESSMEN DURING PAST
YEAR. CROWN PRINCE RESPONDED THAT, IN HIS VIEW, PROCESS OF
OBTAINING APPROVAL WAS IMPORTANT IN THAT IT HELPED AMERICANS
UNDERSTAND U.S.-SAUDI RELATIONSHIP. SAUDI ARABIA HAD BECOME,
HE SAID, LIKE A TENT POLE IN THE MIDDLE EAST; THERE WERE STAKES
HOLDING TENT DOWN, BUT WITHOUT THE POLE THE TENT WOULD FALL.

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3. CROWN PRINCE WENT ON TO SAY HE HAD RECENTLY BEEN ASKED BY
GERMAN TV INTERVIEWERS WHETHER SAUDI ARABIA WOULD EMBARGO
ITS OIL IN CASE OF TROUBLE IN MIDDLE EAST. CROWN PRINCE SAID
HE HAD RESPONDED THAT, AS ONE WOULD NOT DENY WATER TO THIRST
HUMAN BEINGS, SAUDI ARABIA WOULD NOT CUT OFF OIL FROM THE WEST
AND THE THIRD WORLD.

4. I TOLD CROWN PRINCE HIS REMARKS WERE MOST WELCOME. I SAID GIVEN THE NEAR IDENTITY OF U.S.-SAUDI INTERESTS ON MANY ISSUES, WE SHOULD WORK TOGETHER CLOSELY TO SOLVE MANY PROBLEMS OF THE WORLD. I CITED IN PARTICULAR THE ARAB-ISRAEL PROBLEM. I SAID THE AIRCRAFT PACKAGE EPISODE HAD DEMONSTRATED TO THE WORLD THAT THE PRESIDENT WAS EVEN-HANDED AND COULD BE TRUSTED BY ALL SIDES. EMPHASIZING THAT I WAS SPEAKING PERSONALLY, I SAID IT WAS MY IMPRESSION FROM MY RECENT CONSULTATIONS IN WASHINGTON THAT THE PRESIDENT WAS RESOLVED TO TAKE SOME KIND OF INITIATIVE TO MOVE THE PEACE PROCESS FORWARD. I DID NOT KNOW WHAT SPECIFICALLY THE PRESIDENT WOULD DO, BUT I WAS SURE HE WOULD WELCOME ANY SUGGESTIONS FROM THE SAG AND WOULD WANT TO SEND THE SECRETARY OR OTHER RANKING OFFICIAL TO CONSULT WITH THE SAUDIS, IN RECOGNITION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF SAUDI SUPPORT TO PROGRESS IN THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE EFFORT.

5. THE CROWN PRINCE RESPONDED THAT HE WAS HAPPY TO HEAR THESE WORDS. HE SAID HE WAS VERY CONCERNED THAT THE CREDIBILITY OF PRESIDENT CARTER AND PRESIDENT SADAT NOT BE DESTROYED AND THAT THE SITUATION HAD BECOME URGENT DUE TO ISRAELI INTRANSIGENCE. ONE COULD NOT GO ON WAITING FOR MIRACLES FROM HEAVEN, HE SAID; HUMAN ACTION WAS NECESSARY. ISRAEL HAD TO BE MADE TO MOVE LEST THE REJECTIONIST GOVERNMENTS IN THE AREA SUCCEEDED IN POISONING PEOPLES' MINDS AGAINST SADAT. "IT WOULD BE PAINFUL INDEED TO SEE SADAT FAIL AND HIS NOBLE EFFORT LEAD TO OSTRACISM."
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ONLY THE USSR WOULD BENEFIT.
GNEHM

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